
NEWS RELEASE

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Architecture Students Recognized for Accessibility Designs

“New American Front Door” competition winners re-conceive role of landscape and entry sequences in single-family residential homes

RICHMOND – Yesterday at the *Architecture Exchange East* conference in Richmond, architecture students from Hampton University, the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech received recognition in the “New American Front Door” design competition.

The jury of three award-winning architects, including one who uses a wheelchair, selected finalists, honorable mentions and other exceptional projects from among more than 20 student submissions. The unique competition is a collaborative effort between the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) – which licenses design professionals and administers fair housing laws – and the University of Virginia School of Architecture.

“These students demonstrated great talent in integrating architecture to support Virginians of all ages and abilities,” said DPOR Director Louise Fontaine Ware.

“People with permanent or temporary mobility problems are often blocked by steps at every entrance to a home,” she continued. “To change that reality, design professionals are challenged to create attractive zero-step entrances within an accessible landscape environment.”

Financed by the Department of Rehabilitative Services and the Virginia Housing Development Authority, the competition encouraged architecture and landscape architecture students in the Commonwealth to re-envision the role of the landscape (front yard) and architecture (front door, porch and entry sequence) in light of accessibility and visitability challenges facing people with disabilities. Students selected one of three design scenarios: urban single-family, suburban single-family or mobile home schemes.

Jury comments on the award winners follow. Downloadable images of the architectural plans, as well as additional information on the competition and jury, are available online at: <http://www.arch.virginia.edu/competitions/visitability/>.

FIRST PRIZE WINNERS (\$2,000 AWARD)

Daniel Norman and Carter Williams

University of Virginia

Jury Comments: This scheme incorporates landscape and architectural strategies in a seamless approach, connecting the porch to the sidewalk in a gracious manner. For example, there are no rails – instead plants form the transitions, providing a new conception of the “front yard” for the resident. The scheme integrates steps and the ramp in a way that makes able and disabled feel on an equal basis.

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Mark Buenavista and Eric Craig

University of Virginia

Jury Comments: The ramp is parallel with the mobile home, using the full length to move up to a generous porch and into the house. This is an architecturally expressive solution that makes an “event” out of the ramp, and everyone uses it. This approach integrates the mobile home into the overall design, improving it in the process.

SECOND PRIZE WINNERS (\$500 AWARD)

Duckjune Park

University of Virginia

Jury Comments: The ramp in this scheme becomes a major element of expression and tectonic innovation. It is a simple and elegant modular approach, adding detail and scale to the existing mobile home.

Edward P. Singer

University of Virginia

Jury Comments: This is a beautifully resolved architectural expression for the front yard, porch and access. It integrates architectural and landscape in a well-coordinated whole. However, it inadvertently presents something of a “wall” for someone in a wheelchair. Although it is technically accessible, the scheme is not optimal because the stairs present themselves forcefully in a way that might seem to exclude the disabled resident or visitor.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Allison Dryer

University of Virginia

Jury Comments: This scheme develops the garage as a major expression for a newly conceived residence. The jury applauded the dramatic re-interpretation that recognizes the value of a generous garage entry, especially for houses in extreme climates.

Samuel E. Scheibel

Virginia Tech

Jury Comments: This scheme develops an idea of community composed with four houses brought together around a common court. The court and the houses themselves are accessed by diagonal ramps. The jury applauded the scheme’s insight in making this more than an issue of resolution for an individual residence. It suggests that visitability affects the way one thinks about larger community issues.

ADDITIONAL EXHIBITED PROJECTS

Kimberly Brown, *University of Virginia*

Virginia Koon, *University of Virginia*

Kimberly Stone, *Hampton University*

Reginald Truxon, *Hampton University*

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About DPOR and the APELSCIDLA Board:

The Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) regulates more than 300,000 individuals and businesses in nearly 40 occupations ranging from architects and contractors to cosmetologists and real estate agents. The Board for Architects, Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, Certified Interior Designers and Landscape Architects is composed of three licensed architects, three licensed professional engineers, three licensed land surveyors, two certified landscape architects, and two certified interior designers. For more information, visit DPOR online at www.dpor.virginia.gov.